



**David Wiesner**

## **TeachingBooks Movie Transcript**

**David Wiesner, interviewed in his studio in Fox Point, Wisconsin on August 6, 2001.**

**This is a transcript of the movie available on TeachingBooks.net. It is offered here to give you a quick assessment of the program topics, as well as to enable people with auditory disabilities access to the words.**

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The process I go through for making a book amounts to creating the book about four times. The first time is in my sketchbook, in which I make little thumbnail drawings, one for each of the pages, and each of these little boxes represents a double-page spread. It's here that I write the book. I write the story. I design the look, the layout. Essentially, I'm creating the book at this stage.

The next stage is to do a full-size dummy — cutout pieces of paper done in pencil, but to the size and the shape that the book will actually be, with more detail.

Each individual page is done on tracing paper to the size that I'm going to do the finished painting. This is the longest stage of doing the book, usually. But it's also fun. This is where I go, "okay, what's everything really going to look like?" I can go out and find as much cool stuff to draw as I can.

The fourth version of the book is the actual finished paintings that I do. It's the book as a whole that is the true creation. That's the thing that excites me, more than "hey, look at my beautiful picture."

### ***On The Three Pigs***

There was a graphic idea that I wanted to play around with: What's behind the pictures in a book? Elmer's chasing Bugs around. They go through the hollow log. They go through all the usual stuff. But all of a sudden they run right out of the cartoon. I laughed and then I gasped. I just was like, "oh, my gosh, what was that?" My seven-year-old self was really amazed by this ability to jump out of this one reality and into another.

Here was the story about the three pigs. Great. I could draw that. But also they had a great reason to want to leave their story. Every time it gets read, two of them get eaten up. How much fun can this be? So that set in motion for me the real emotional undercurrent of the story, which was these characters who were looking for a place where they could belong.

[Reading] The wolf said, "Then I'll huff and I'll puff and I'll blow your house in." So the wolf huffed and he puffed and he blew the house in. And Pig Number one says, "Hey, he blew me right out

of the story." And, in fact, he has. The Big Bad Wolf, in huffing and puffing, has blown the pig right out of the frame of the picture and out of the story. But the story still continues: And ate the pig up — except that the wolf cannot find the pig anywhere under the debris. He's nowhere to be found. There is no pig left.

### **On the Sounds of Wordless Books**

I've been asked what *Tuesday* sounds like. Actually, I saw people get in a fight about what *Tuesday* sounds like. Someone who thought it was full of all sorts of wild, cartoon-type zooming noises and someone else going, "No, no," adamantly. It was very quiet and sedate and just floating, and very ambient sort of sounds. A book like *Sector 7* should be full of noise and incredible sound, but as I was doing it, I don't know that I pictured any of that sound in my mind.

As we grow out of picture books, the focus becomes on the words or the occasional illustration, as opposed to learning how to really read the pictures as much as we do the words. If *Tuesday*, by winning the Caldecott, brought more exposure and a higher profile to the wordless book, I'm thrilled. I would be delighted if that was the case.

### **On June 29, 1999**

I had done a painting in 1980 as a portfolio sample. It was of a large pepper sort of floating in the sky with these little people holding onto ropes trying to pull it down to the ground. I took this around and show art directors and I'd say, "Do you have any stories about stuff like this?" They'd say, "No. Don't call us; we'll call you." So I realized I had to start writing my own.

[Reading] "The place is Hohokus, New Jersey. The year is 1999. On May 11<sup>th</sup>, after months of careful research and planning, Holly Evans launches vegetable seedlings into the sky."

### **On Imagination.**

It's funny how often I, and other artists, I'm sure, get asked where our ideas come from. Ultimately the imagination needs no outside stimulus. The mind is capable of extraordinary things, if you follow it, your mind will take you to amazing places. I feel fortunate, I guess, that I have the ability to put those places down on paper and share them with people.

### **Books by David Wiesner**

- THREE PIGS, THE, Clarion Books / Houghton Mifflin Company, 2001
- SECTOR 7, Clarion Books / Houghton Mifflin Company 1999
- NIGHT OF THE GARGOYLES (written by Eve Bunting), Clarion Books / Houghton Mifflin Company, 1994
- FROM SEA TO SHINING SEA (included in compilation by Amy L. Cohn), Scholastic Press, 1993
- JUNE 29, 1999, Clarion Books / Houghton Mifflin Company, 1992
- TUESDAY, Clarion Books / Houghton Mifflin Company, 1991
- TONGUES OF JADE (written by Laurence Yep), HarperCollins Publishers, 1991
- HURRICANE, Clarion Books / Houghton Mifflin Company, 1990
- RAINBOW PEOPLE (written by Laurence Yep), Harper & Row, 1989
- SORCERER'S APPRENTICE, THE (written by Marianna Mayer), Bantam Books, 1989
- FIREBRAT (written by Nancy Willard), Alfred A. Knopf, 1988

- FREE FALL, Lothrop, Lee & Shepard, 1988
- LOATHSOME DRAGON, THE (retold by David Wiesner & Kim Kahng), Putnam, 1987
- KITE FLIER (written by Dennis Haseley), Fourwinds Press, 1986
- E.T., THE STORYBOOK OF THE GREEN PLANET (written by William Kotzwinkle; based on a story by Steven Spielberg), Putnam, 1985
- WAND: THE RETURN TO MESMERIA (written by Allan W. Eckert), Little, Brown and Company, 1985
- DARK GREEN TUNNEL, THE (written by Allan W. Eckert), Little, Brown and Company, 1984
- MIRANTY AND THE ALCHEMIST (written by Vera Chapman), Avon Books, 1983
- NEPTUNE RISING: SONGS AND TALES OF THE UNDERSEA FOLK (written by Jane Yolen), Philomel Books, 1982
- OWLY (written by Mike Thaler), Harper & Row, 1982
- BOY WHO SPOKE CHIMP, THE (written by Jane Yolen), Alfred A. Knopf, 1981
- MAN FROM THE SKY (written by Avi), Alfred A. Knopf, 1981
- ONE BAD THING ABOUT BIRTHDAYS (written by David R. Collins), Harcourt Inc, 1981
- UGLY PRINCESS, THE (written by Nancy Luenn), Little, Brown and Company, 1981
- HONEST ANDREW (written by Gloria Skurzynski), Harcourt Inc, 1980

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